

February 23, 2023

In support of SB 1095.

Dear Chairs Senator McCrory, Representative Currey, and members of the housing committee:

My name is Kymberly Escarsega I am a resident of Naugatuck, Connecticut and an ally of the Connecticut Justice Alliance. I am testifying in support of S.B. 1095: An Act Concerning the Use of School Resource Officers In Connecticut Schools.

All students deserve to feel safe, secure and supported in their places of learning. Yet too often our schools rely on policing to keep children in line, rather than funding professionals trained to deliver students necessary developmental and behavioral health resources.

SROs in schools are intended to maintain a safe and secure learning environment, but [studies have shown](#) that SROs do not measurably increase safety. Further, the presence of an SRO in a school increases the likelihood that youth, specifically Black and Latino/a/x youth will be referred to law enforcement and/or arrested.

Schools with SROs also referred students with disabilities to law enforcement at a rate higher than the overall state average. Experiencing arrest, or watching a classmate experience arrest, can be traumatizing for students. Currently, some districts in Connecticut invest more money in school resources officers than they do in nurses. By default, SROs do not receive training in mental health services and therefore are not the appropriate persons to respond to behavioral issues.

I strongly support S.B. 1095. I hope the Committee and Connecticut lawmakers will vote in favor of this bill. Together, we can build an educational system that is centered on the social-emotional well-being of students through care, resources, learning, and restoration.

Thank you for your time,

Kymberly Escarsega